

1. A method for performing an injection using a passive needle guard including a body having a medicine cartridge therein comprising one of a syringe, ampoule or vial for containing medicine, and a shield slidably attached to the body, the body retained by cooperating catches on the body and the shield in a first position wherein the needle is exposed, the body being biased to retract with respect to the shield towards a second retracted position for covering a needle extending from the cartridge, the method comprising:

B₁ inserting the needle into a patient's skin while holding the shield a predetermined distance therefrom;

applying a distal force on a plunger communicating with the cartridge to inject medication into the patient until the plunger contacts a latch member extending from the passive needle guard;

depressing the plunger further to deflect the latch member to disengage the cooperating catches, wherein the body becomes biased to move towards the retracted position; and

releasing the distal force on the plunger, thereby retracting the body towards the retracted position, wherein the needle is substantially covered by the shield.

B₂ 10. A method for performing an injection using a passive needle guard including a body having a medicine cartridge therein comprising one of a syringe, ampoule or vial for containing medicine, and a shield slidably attached to the body, the shield being biased to move distally with respect to the body, the body and shield being retained by cooperating catches in a position wherein a needle extending from the cartridge is exposed, the method comprising:

inserting the needle into a patient's skin while holding a portion of the body;

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applying a distal force on a plunger communicating with the cartridge to inject medication into the patient until the plunger engages a latch member extending from the passive needle guard; depressing the plunger further to deflect the latch member to disengage the cooperating catches, whereupon the shield advances automatically into contact with the patient's skin; and withdrawing the needle from the patient's skin, whereby the shield continues to advance distally with respect to the body until the needle is substantially contained within the shield.

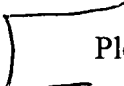
14. A passive needle guard, comprising:

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a body having proximal and distal ends and a cavity therein for receiving a medicine cartridge comprising one of a syringe, ampoule or vial for containing medicine, and the cartridge having a distal tip for administering a medication from within the cartridge;

a shield having proximal and distal ends, the shield slidably attached to the body, the body being biased to retract with respect to the shield from a first position wherein the distal tip of the cartridge is exposed towards a second retracted position for withdrawing the distal tip of the cartridge into the shield;

cooperating catches on the body and the shield for holding the body and shield in the extended position; and

a latch member extending proximally from the proximal end of one of the shield and the body, the latch member being deflectable for disengaging the cooperating catches upon depression of a plunger coupled to the medicine cartridge, whereby the body may be retracted to the retracted position.

 Please add the following claims:

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- 25. A method as in Claim 1 wherein the medicine cartridge is a prefilled syringe.
 - 26. A method as in Claim 1 wherein the medicine cartridge is a unit dose syringe.
 - 27. A method as in Claim 14 wherein the medicine cartridge is a prefilled syringe.
 - 28. A method as in Claim 14 wherein the medicine cartridge is a unit dose syringe.